

In the Claims:

1. (original): A visual linker, comprising:
 an allocation module for allocating sections of code and data into memory of a processor;
 an output module for writing a file of said allocated sections of code and data;
 an incomplete link module, wherein said incomplete link comprises allocation information on those sections that are allocated by said allocation module and those that have not yet been allocated;
 a link server that interprets linking instructions modifies said incomplete link module accordingly and invokes said allocation module accordingly and invokes said output module accordingly;
 an interface for receiving instructions for said link server and for providing feedback as to the state of said incomplete link;
 and a graphical user interface that generates said instructions in response to user gestures and graphically displays the state of said incomplete link.
2. (currently amended): A method of incrementally and interactively allocating code and data sections, comprising the steps of:
 generate a specific allocation instruction from a client program or program component;
 executing said instruction by making alterations to allocation information associated with one or more code or data sections;
 resolving allocation to the full extent possible given the current allocation information associated with all code and data sections involved in the a link;
 report to client programs the current allocation state inclusive of allocation errors and sections not

yet allocated;

and repeating these steps until all sections of code and data have been allocated.

3. (original): The method of Claim 2 including the step of interpreting a user gesture made to a graphical user interface as a specific allocation instruction.
4. (original): The method of Claim 3 wherein a gesture is a drag-and-drop operation or a point-and-click operation on a video screen.
5. (original): The method of Claim 2 including the step of displaying said current allocation state graphically to the user, inclusive of allocation errors and sections not yet allocated.
6. (original): The method of Claim 2 including the step of writing the results to an output file.
7. (original): The method of Claim 2 including the step of recording said instructions for replay in a linking strategy file.
8. (original): The method of Claim 7 wherein the record of instructions may be displayed and altered through a graphical user interface.
9. (original): The method of Claim 2 wherein the set of code and data sections involved in the link may be determined by a reachability check performed using a cross-reference graph.
10. (original): The method of Claim 2 wherein an instruction may specify an overflow policy to be used whenever a portion of memory fills up during allocation.
11. (original): The method of Claim 2 wherein an instruction may provide for an allocator-optimized stack or heap size by specifying a minimum and maximum size instead of a particular size.
12. (original): The method of Claim 2 wherein one instruction may apply allocation operations to a related group of sections simultaneously.

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13. (original): The method of Claim 12 wherein the sections may be the set of sections reachable from a specific starting section, as determined by a cross-reference graph.